(a) whether the enquiry into the entire uniform scam case has since been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken against the persons found guilty;

(c) if not, the reasons for issuing uniforms to the employees despite having been found to be sub-standard;

(d) whether any permission was obtained from the CBI or the court prior to issuing the sub-standard uniforms; and

(e) if not, what action Government propose to initiate against the persons involved in issuing these uniforms?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (e) The investigation report has not been received from CBI. The disciplinary proceedings/prosecution, if any, will be initiated after the receipt of investigation report from CBI. However, four officers and one employee have been placed under suspension.

The samples of the uniform were got tested from NITRA (Northern India Textiles Research Association) linked to Ministry of Textiles, Government of India and found to be conforming to MTNL (Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited) specifications. CBI has not commented about the quality of uniforms. Therefore, the uniforms were distributed to the staff as per agreement between MTNL Corporate Office and the recognized union.

National Highway Patrol Force

*274. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider constituting a special National Highway Patrol Force, comprising both of Civil Wing and

Law Enforcement Wing under the National Highway Authority of India;

(b) whether Government consider such a step necessary due to increasing lawlessness on National Highways and also to remove blockades caused by accidents/encroachments etc.; and

(c) whether it is also proposed to include para-medical personnel in the Patrol Force to provide first-aid treatment to accident victims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) to (c) Constitution of a special National Highway Patrol Force would require enactment of necessary legislation. The proposal is yet to be conceptualised.

Cottage industries in rural areas

*275. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to announce new incentives to encourage setting up of cottage industries in the rural areas for reducing unemployment in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI KARIYA MUNDA): (a) to (c) The Government is already implementing the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for the promotion and development of khadi and village industries including cottage industries in rural areas. Under this programme, about 11 lakhs jobs have been created so far. It is expected that additional 4 lakhs jobs will be created during the